

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 216600 TOSEC 250022

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEL AVIV 5998 ACTION SECSTATE INFO CAIRO

1 SEP 76

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 5998

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS DIA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, EG, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI ACTION AGAINST AMOCO RIG IN GULF OF SUEZ

REFS: TEL AVIV 5991; CAIRO 11704

FOLLOWING IS COMPLETE ACCOUNT OF MEETING BETWEEN DATT AND ARMY ATTACHE AND IDF INTEL REPS, INCLUDING CHIEF OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND CHIEF OF NAVAL INTEL, NIGHT OF AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 1 (2330-0030). IDF REPS STATED FOLLOWING:

A. THERE ARE SEVEN IDF PATROL CRAFT IN THE VICINITY OF THE MARINER. SIX ARE ENGAGED IN ROUTINE TRAINING EXERCISE AND ARE NOT CLOSE TO MARINER. ONE IS ASSIGNED TO MONITORING MARINER ACTIVITY.

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B. MARINER ENTERED ISRAELI HELD WATERS AT 1110 LOCAL. AT

1245 IT STARTED TO PUT DOWN LEGS. BETWEEN THAT TIME AND 1500, THREE WORKBOATS WERE IN AREA AS WELL AS A HELICOPTER. THE MARINER ENTERED AND CROSSED GULF OF SUEZ MEDIAN LINE BY 1.3 MILES.

C. IDF PATROL CRAFT CAPTAIN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ORDERS FROM POLITICAL AUTHORITY, APPROACHED MARINER AND GAVE FOLLOWING MESSAGE "YOU ARE IN ISRAELI HELD WATERS AND ARE REQUESTED TO LEAVE". IN RESPONSE TO QUERY, IDF INTEL REP REPEATED THAT WORD USED WAS "REQUESTED". THERE WAS NO ULTIMATUM GIVEN BY IDF CAPTAIN AS TO TIME BY WHICH MARINER MUST MOVE OUT.

D. THE MARINER GAVE AN ANSWER AS FOLLOWS . . . "IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MOVE FOR EIGHT OR NINE HOURS".

E. THE IDF PATROL CRAFT THEN MOVE AWAY AND WAS GIVEN ORDERS NOT TO MOVE CLOSER THAN 2000 METERS TO MARINER. THE IDF CAPTAIN HAD ORDERS NOT TO MOVE OR SAIL IN ANY WAY WHICH MIGHT SEEM HOSTILE TO THE MARINER.

F. IDF REPS SAID THAT THIS TYPE CASE IS NOT NEW TO THE IDF, NOR IS IT NEW TO THE US. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE IN VIEW AS TO THE RECOGNITION OF THE MEDIAN LINE. NO EGYPTIAN WARSHIP HAS CROSSED MEDIAN LINE SINCE 1968 EXCEPT DURING OCTOBER 1973 WAR. ISRAEL AND EGYPT (THE LATTER BY DE FACTO RECOGNITION) DO RECOGNIZE THE MEDIAN LINE. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE 1973 WAR THAT AN OIL EXPLORATION SHIP UNDER EGYPTIAN CONTRACT HAS VENTURED EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE AND STARTED DRIFFLING PREPARATIONS. IDF NAVY ORDERS ARE NOT TO PERMIT ANY FOREIGN VESSEL, NOT OTHERWISE AUTHORIZED, TO ENTER, DRILL, ETC. . . , EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE. THE IDF ORDERS HAVE NOT BEEN CHANGED IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS.

G. THERE ARE (2400 LOCAL) NO INDICATIONS OF ANY EGYPTIAN GUNBOATS IN THE AREA. IT WILL TAKE 5-6 HOURS FOR GUNBOATS TO REACH THE AREA FROM THE NORTH AND 3 HOURS FROM THE SOUTH. AT 0020 LOCAL, IDF NAVY INTELL STATED THAT
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NO EGYPTIAN GUNBOATS HAD LEFT ANY ANCHORAGE ON THE WEST SIDE OF SUEZ IN THE PAST SIX HOURS.

H. AT 0020 LOCAL, THE IDF PATROL CRAFT WHICH WAS MONITORING THE MARINER LEFT STATION AND JOINED OTHERS IDF PATROL CRAFT IN THE AREA. ALL ARE APPROXIMATELY FOUR MILES FROM THE MARINER.

I. THERE IS NO IDF INTENTION TO FIGHT EITHER TONIGHT
OR AT ANY OTHER TIME. THE IDF DOES NOT FORESEE ANY
CONFRONTATION EVENTUALITY. IF NO MARINER PREPARATIONS
TO MOVE ARE NOTED BY MORNING, THE IDF PATROL CRAFT
WILL SO REPORT TO GHQ.

J. COMMENT: IT IS OBVIOUS THAT IDF WAS IN INSTANT
COMMUNICATIONS WITH IDF CRAFT IN VICINITY OF MARINER
AT ALL TIMES, INCLUDING DURING LAST NIGHT'S MEET-
ING. IT WAS ALSO OBVIOUS THAT IDF INTEL WAS COM-
PLETLY AWARE OF ENTIRE SITUATION CONCERNING MARINER
WELL BEFORE QUERY BY DATT.

K. INLIGHT CAIRO'S 11704, ATTACHES ARE SEEING IDF
AT 1100 THIS MORNING. THEY WILL DEMAND FULL EXPLANATION
FOR APPARENTLY MISLEADING INFORMATION PROVIDED LAST NIGHT, PARTICU-
LARLY ISRAELI ASSURANCE THAT NO ULTIMATUM HAD BEEN GIVEN
TO MARINER. WE WILL REPORT RESULTS OF THIS MEETING LATER
TODAY.

TOON
UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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